

Request for Proposals
Planning and Evaluation Consultation for the Safe Schools Program
The Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth

Description of Services:

The Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students is soliciting proposals from individuals or organizations to provide consulting on program planning to enable Safe Schools Program staff to:

1. Increase Safe Schools Team effectiveness
2. Engage in a program planning process
3. Receive leadership coaching and organizational support

It is expected that the consultant will:

- Meet individually and as a group with Safe Schools Program Staff to increase team effectiveness;
- Facilitate a strategic planning process to build the capacity of the program to support LGBTQ students in schools;
- Serve as a development coach for the program director.

For information about the Safe Schools Program, please see pp. 2-5 of this document.

Funds available: \$3,000

Dates of Services Provided: 2//15-6/30/15

Proposal Elements:

Please submit the following by 2/10/15:

1. A brief description / outline of services you will provide, including the type and number of meetings you propose to meet the parameters outlined above and timeline for these services.
2. Budget
3. Resume and cover letter

Please e-mail your proposal to:

Jeff Perrotti, Director, Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students, at
JMPERROTTI@AOL.COM

Questions may be directed to Jeff Perrotti at the above email address.

Background Information on the Safe Schools Program:

Purpose and Activities of the Safe Schools Program

In line with the mission of the Massachusetts Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Youth (Commission), the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students (Safe Schools Program) works in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) to recommend effective policies, programs, and resources for LGBTQ youth to thrive.

Founded in 1993 in response to concerns about LGBTQ youth suicides and other risk factors, the Safe Schools Program now participates in developing policy and offers a range of services designed to help schools implement state laws affecting LGBTQ students, including the state's anti-bullying law, gender identity law, and student anti-discrimination law.

The Safe Schools Program is funded by a State budget line item—amounting to \$300,000 in the fiscal year 2015 (July 2014-June 2015)—which tasks the Commission to use the funds to “address issues related to the implementation of the state's anti-bullying law as outlined in section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws.”

With a portion of these funds, the Commission hires consultants (currently, a program director, a program manager, a Massachusetts Promise Fellow, and trainers) to assist school districts and ESE by providing policy guidance, technical assistance, professional development, and resources to school personnel, parents, student leaders, and school-based Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) on issues related to gender identity, sexual orientation, and school climate.

Overall, the more focused goals of the Safe Schools Program are to:

- Help develop statewide policies that support LGBTQ students;
- Offer technical assistance and training to school personnel to increase knowledge, develop empathy, and build skills to support LGBTQ students;
- Create and sustain safe and supportive school environments for LGBTQ students;
- Provide leadership development and networking opportunities for student leaders;

- Support families of LGBTQ students;
- Implement related suicide, violence, and bullying prevention efforts; and
- Reduce health disparities for LGBTQ students.

In addition to developing statewide policy and providing ESE sanctioned technical assistance and training, the Safe Schools Program provides direct service to students and adult advisors through the GSA Student Leadership Summit and the GSA Leadership Council. These efforts are described in more detail in the next section.

Developing Statewide Policy and Building ESE's Capacity

Through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2013 with ESE, the Safe Schools Program is authorized to provide technical assistance and support to educators and LGBTQ students in schools. This has allowed the Safe Schools Program to be institutionalized at ESE in order for the program to achieve its goals. Examples of institutionalization include:

- Safe Schools staff are physically embedded at ESE, which allows them to participate in ESE initiatives such as the CDC WISHES grant, the development of Model Curriculum Units, and the State Student Advisory Council.
- In an annual correspondence, the Commissioner of ESE informs all MA middle and high school principals of available technical assistance and relevant LGBTQ policies and laws and invites these principals to send students and educators to the GSA Leadership Council meetings.
- Safe Schools staff assist in developing model policies and guidance for ESE that outline best practices and implementation strategies such as:
 - *ESE Guidance on Parental Notification when Bullying is Related to Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity and Expression*
 - *ESE Guidance for Massachusetts Public Schools Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity*
 - The Board of Education's updated and expanded *Recommendations on the Support and Safety of LGBTQ Students* (to be voted on by MA Board of Education in Feb. 2015)

- The Safe Schools Program has a prominent presence on the ESE Website
- The Safe Schools Program provided technical assistance and training to over 150 schools in 2014.
- In June 2014 the Safe Schools Program launched a “training of trainers” program to develop a cadre of 15 trainers to increase the program’s capacity and diversity. To date, eight people have been trained and have provided technical assistance and training to over 25 schools.

Massachusetts GSA Student Leadership Summit

The annual three-day Massachusetts GSA Student Leadership Summit offers a unique opportunity for student leaders from across the Commonwealth (55 students in 2014) to engage with a diverse community of their peers in order to develop and enhance leadership skills. Through participation in content-based workshops, group team-building activities, structured networking, and sharing effective practices, students develop the skills to effectively lead a regional network of GSAs and to positively impact school culture for LGBTQ students. Core programming for the Massachusetts GSA Student Leadership Summit is rooted in a social justice framework, providing LGBTQ content, coupled with building leadership skills. The Summit serves as the training ground and kick-off for the Massachusetts GSA Leadership Council.

Massachusetts GSA Leadership Council

The Massachusetts GSA Leadership Council provides networking and skill-building opportunities for GSA student leaders and advisors to promote student leadership and improve school climate. Modeled on the Student Advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Massachusetts GSA Leadership Council consists of a state council and five regional councils. Participants in the annual student leadership summit comprise the members of the State GSA Leadership Council, which meets bimonthly at ESE. Regional GSA Leadership Council meetings take place bimonthly in schools in five regions. Schools are invited to register a team of four students and two adult advisors to join other student leaders and advisors in the region. The total number of participants in 2014 in the GSA Leadership Council was approximately 500 students and 100 adults.

Collaboration with Community Partners

The Safe Schools Program collaborates with community partners to increase their capacity to provide school-based support for LGBTQ students and their families. Safe Schools Program staff regularly refer students, families, and school staff to LGBTQ community agencies in an effort to best serve the needs of LGBTQ youth outside of school. In addition, to increase the capacity of the Commission, the Safe Schools Program, and community agencies to serve the needs of LGBTQ Youth, community partners are represented in the Safe Schools Program's training cadre, and community agencies and resources are listed on the Commission's and Safe Schools Program's websites.

The GSA Leadership Summit and the GSA Leadership Council are actualized through deep-rooted partnerships and collaboration with LGBTQ community-based agencies. Several community agencies contribute funding, staffing, and other resources to the annual GSA Leadership Summit, and the Safe Schools Program harnesses the content knowledge and skills of community partners to provide training, staffing, and diversity for the Summit and State/Regional GSA Leadership Council Meetings. Community partnerships include:

- Greater Boston Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
- Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educational Network of Massachusetts (GLSEN Massachusetts)
- The Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (BAGLY) & the AGLY Network
- Boston Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services (GLASS)
- Boston FLAG Flag Football
- Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
- Health Imperatives
- Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC)
- Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services (GLASS)
- Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC)